

days left, at least as it now stands, because there is to be a recess beginning at the end of the month, is we've got to assume the status quo and we've got to assume the worst because it would be irresponsible not to. So, in addition, I have to put in a bill—that's in addition to the amendment—that would allow the District to remain open.

To illustrate just how unintended would be a shutdown, the House needs to know that the Oversight and Government Reform Committee, on which I sit, has passed a bill that would give the District more autonomy over its local budget and, importantly, would keep the District from shutting down. That bill now is pending and could come to the floor at any point.

□ 1300

The President of the United States has in his budget a shutdown avoidance bill for the District, and the Senate Appropriations Committee has the same language in its bill. The House appropriators have taken the position that they do not believe the District should be shut down. Of course, they defer to the authorizers, as I indicated, and the Oversight Committee has legislation that has been voted out of committee that is now pending.

I think any Member who has held local office—and by the way, I did not hold local office before I came to Congress—have, I think, a better idea of what such a threat means to a local jurisdiction and how much it is at odds with what both sides understand to be the American approach to federalism, when local jurisdictions get to run their own localities and States and, by the way, get to raise their own funds. That is what the District has done, and it has done it well.

These frequent shutdown threats have had a very disruptive effect on the city and on its employees and on its residents. It does something that we, I'm sure, appreciate that no elected official wants to have happen: it casts a pall of uncertainty right when you're looking forward to a budget for the coming year. That kind of uncertainty already has had its effect. Wall Street, for example, understands that the District budget is not final until it somehow is passed out of the Congress. The District pays a premium—it pays a price—for that because there are two bodies, not one, that get a say over its local budget.

No city should ever have to wonder whether it will be shut down. Shutdowns really don't occur at the local level because residents won't let it occur. They are close enough to the people so that that is not a threat you could much get away with at the local level. Here we are some levels above that, and most Members and most Americans don't know that there is local legislation that is put in that peril as I speak.

The District has about 630,000 residents. It's growing well. People are moving into the city, not out. There

are cranes all over town; and much of this comes out of the excellent management of the city, out of the way the city has conducted its economic affairs, out of the fact that it has an independent chief financial officer, who cannot be fired because he disagrees with the council or with the Mayor and, therefore, has to tell the truth. It's all worked together to make the District the kind of jurisdiction that the Congress, at least, should have no concerns about and, I believe, has no concerns about.

The price the District would pay is hard for me to make clear to Members because it would have to occur before they felt it. We have come close to feeling it; and almost 20 years ago, we did, in fact, feel it. There are some parts of your services to the people that continue, but huge parts cannot because the Congress has not passed the budget, not because the Congress objects to the budget and not because any Member of this House desires that outcome.

This House does not mean to hold the District budget as hostage. If it did, there would have been something the District could do to get out of the hostage fight. So what makes this so frustrating is that there is nothing we can give, nothing we can do to extricate ourselves from a fight that is wholly inside baseball within this Chamber and the Chamber across the way. To be sure, I have contacted my Senate allies; but, frankly, this has to be done here. We've got to get agreement on both sides of the aisle to the simple proposition that those of us who believe in the great and important freedoms of the Framers would least want to be held responsible for closing down a local jurisdiction, one with which we have no beef.

This country was established on a pedestal of federalism. One thing we understand is the difference between a local jurisdiction and its rights and responsibilities and ourselves. If anything, there are Members of this Chamber who would want some of what the Federal government does no longer done by the Federal Government at all but, in fact, to be the work of local jurisdictions. Many in this Chamber not only support but, indeed, believe that local jurisdictions do a better job at governing than does any institution at the Federal level. I can, therefore, find no set of principles here from any Member of Congress that would be in play when the decision is made on my amendment to the continuing resolution or on the bill that I will introduce as a fallback in case it does not occur.

As we go home, perhaps earlier than expected, to ponder what to do with keeping the Federal Government open, I ask that Members bear in mind that they would be closing not only Federal agencies but the District of Columbia Government. In the name of the people of the District of Columbia, I ask you, wherever we stand on the Federal Government, to allow the District of Columbia to move forward, to govern

itself, and to take care of its day-to-day business.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

REMOVAL OF NAME OF MEMBER AS COSPONSOR OF H.R. 281

Ms. GABBARD. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to be removed as a cosponsor of H.R. 281.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Hawaii?

There was no objection.

THE INVESTIGATIONS OF CONGRESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2013, the Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GOHMERT) for 30 minutes.

Mr. GOHMERT. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

There are a couple of issues that are certainly worth elaborating on today. One is codified in The Wall Street Journal article from September 11, yesterday, and 7:35 p.m. is when it's timed out. It's regarding IRS Supervisor Lois Lerner. The article is entitled "Lois Lerner's Own Words."

The article reads:

Congress' investigation into the IRS targeting of conservatives has been continuing out of the Syria headlines, and it's turning up news. Emails unearthed by the House Ways and Means Committee between former director of Exempt Organizations Lois Lerner and her staff raise doubts about IRS claims that the targeting wasn't politically motivated and that low-level employees in Cincinnati masterminded the operation.

In a February 2011 email, Ms. Lerner advised her staff, including then Exempt Organizations technical manager Michael Seto and then Rulings and Agreements director Holly Paz, that a Tea Party matter is "very dangerous" and is something "counsel and Lerner adviser Judy Kindell need to be in on." Ms. Lerner adds, "Cincy should probably NOT have these cases."

That's a different tune than the IRS sang in May when former IRS Commissioner Steven Miller said the Agency's overzealous enforcement was the work of two "rogue" employees in Cincinnati. When the story broke, Ms. Lerner suggested that her office had been unaware of the pattern of targeting until she read about it in the newspaper. "So it was pretty much we started seeing information in the press that raised questions for us, and we went back and took a look," she said in May.

Mr. Speaker, so no one misunderstands, it is a crime to give false information to Congress.

The article goes on:

Earlier this summer, IRS lawyer Carter Hull, who oversaw the review of many Tea Party cases and questionnaires, testified that his oversight began in April 2010. Tea Party cases under review are "being supervised by Chip Hull at each step," Ms. Paz wrote to Ms. Lerner in a February 2011 email. "He reviews info from TPs—or Tea Partys—correspondence to TPs, et cetera. No decisions are going out of Cincy until we go all the way through the process with the (c)(3) and (c)(4) cases here."